

automobiles.

Claims 2-9, 11 and 12 are pending; claim 1 being canceled and replaced with new claim 12.

New claim 12 was written to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 112 rejection of claim 1.

The language of claim 12 finds support in both the specification and the drawings. No new matter is added.

The Examiner has imposed a Restriction Requirement, in which Applicants were required to choose between Claims 1-9 (denoted Group I by the Examiner) and Claim 11 (denoted Group II by the Examiner). Applicants provisionally elected Group I, claims 1-9, with traverse, and now affirm said election, with traverse.

Reconsideration of the restriction requirement is respectfully requested. Any search of the masking strip itself is certain to unveil any art pertaining to its use as well, so no undue additional burden would be placed on the Examiner in examining both groups together.

In the event that the Examiner does not find it possible to withdraw the restriction requirement, it is respectfully requested that upon the allowance of elected subject-matter, the non-elected subject matter be rejoined.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for various reasons more specifically indicated in the office action. This claim has now been canceled and rewritten as new claim 12. New claim 12 obviates each of the issues raised by the Examiner in the 35 U.S.C.112 rejection, and this rejection should now be withdrawn. The Examiner will note that each of the limitation of new claim 12 can be found in the specification, or in the drawings. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as obvious over Patel (US 5,385,783) in view of Sakumoto (US 5,683,806). The Examiner sees Patel as disclosing the claimed invention, except for the masking film being folded, and sees Sakumoto as providing this. The Examiner overlooks some important features of Applicants' invention, however.

Patel discloses a masking tape comprised of a paper substrate having an impregnant, one surface coated with a release coating and one surface coated with an adhesive. This is a coated paper, which might, at best, be seen as a "multilayer" composite. Such a coated paper does not have anything to do with Applicants' novel strip, which has a paper extending over and beyond the lower edge of the adhesive tape, and a film covering the paper and extending over and beyond the lower edge of the paper. Nothing in Sakumoto would provide any of the elements that are present in Applicants' invention and absent in Patel's.

Applicants' invention does not simply "comprise" tape, paper and film. In Applicants'

invention, the elements comprising the masking strip are arranged in a novel way and relate to each other in a novel manner.

Note that Applicants' masking paper ("5" in the figures) is attached to the marginal area of the adhesive tape ("1" in the figures) and extends beyond the bottom edge of the adhesive tape. Then, the masking film ("6" in the figures) is attached to the marginal area of the adhesive tape, but above the point where the masking paper is attached, and then covers over the masking paper and extends beyond the lower edge of the masking paper.

All of these limitations are recited in new claim 12, and none of these limitations are disclosed or suggested in either Patel or Sakumoto.

The rejection of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as obvious over Patel (US 5,385,783) in view of Sakumoto (US 5,683,806) should accordingly now be withdrawn.

In view of the present amendments and remarks it is believed that claims ²⁻⁹1-9, 11 and 12 are now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of said claims by the Examiner is respectfully requested and the allowance thereof is courteously solicited.

CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

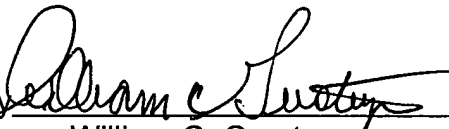
If any extension of time for this amendment is required, applicants request that this be considered a petition therefore. Please charge the required petition fee to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fee or credit any excess to Deposit
Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted

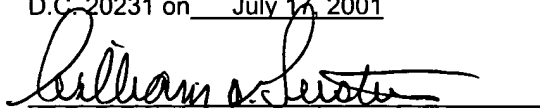
NORRIS, McLAUGHLIN & MARCUS

By 
William C. Gerstenzang
Reg. No. 27,552

WCG:tmo

220 East 42nd Street
30th Floor
New York, New York 10017
(212) 808-0700

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Date July 17, 2001



**MARKED-UP COPIES OF AMENDED CLAIMS
SHOWING CHANGES RELATIVE TO PREVIOUS VERSIONS**

Claim 2 (twice amended). Masking strip according to Claim [1] 12, wherein the adhesive tape [(1)] is a heat-resistant adhesive tape with a heat resistance of a maximum of 130°C (1 hour).

Claim 3 (twice amended). Masking strip according to Claim [1] 12, wherein the adhesive tape [(1)] is 15-75 mm wide.

Claim 4 (twice amended). Masking strip according to Claim [1] 12, wherein the paper support [(2)] is creped, stretchable and flexible and has good paint adhesion, and the entire adhesive tape [(1)] has a thickness of 100-250 µm.

Claim 5 (twice amended). Masking strip according to Claim [1] 12, wherein the masking paper [(5)] is an unbleached kraft paper of 30-40 g/m² and a width of 15-50 cm.

Claim 6 (twice amended). Masking strip according to Claim [1] 12, wherein the masking film [(6)] is a polyolefin film 7-40 µm thick, which is corona pretreated, and is 0.5-2 µm wide.

Claim 7 (twice amended). Masking strip according to Claim [1] 12, wherein the masking film [(6)] is folded according to the dimensions of the masking paper [(5)] and is folded against the latter accordion-wise.

Claim 8 (twice amended). Masking strip according to Claim [1] 12, wherein the marginal area [(4)] of the self-adhesive composition [(3)] to which the masking paper [(5)] adheres, is 1-5 mm wide.

Claim 9 (twice amended). Masking strip according to Claim [1] 12, wound into a roll, the masking film [(6)] being folded and the length of the roll corresponding approximately to the width of the masking paper [(5)] plus the width of the adhesive tape [(1)].

Claim 11 (amended). A method for painting an automobile, wherein parts of the automobile are not to be painted, which comprises masking parts of said automobile which are not to be painted with a masking strip according to Claim [1] 12.